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THREE TYPES OF FRONTING CONSTRUCTIONS IN PAPIAMENTU *

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0. In this paper three types of fronting constructions in Papiamentu, the vernacular language of the Caribbean islands Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao, are described and contrasted. It will be shown that, in spite of their superficial similarities, the formal properties of the three constructions are quite different. Similarly, their pragmatic characteristics are distinct.

First, a brief sketch of Papiamentu will be given. Then the three types of fronting will be described, and finally, some problems for future research will be mentioned. The descriptive framework adopted in this paper is that of Chomsky (1977) and Chomsky & Lasnik (1977).

1. Papiamentu

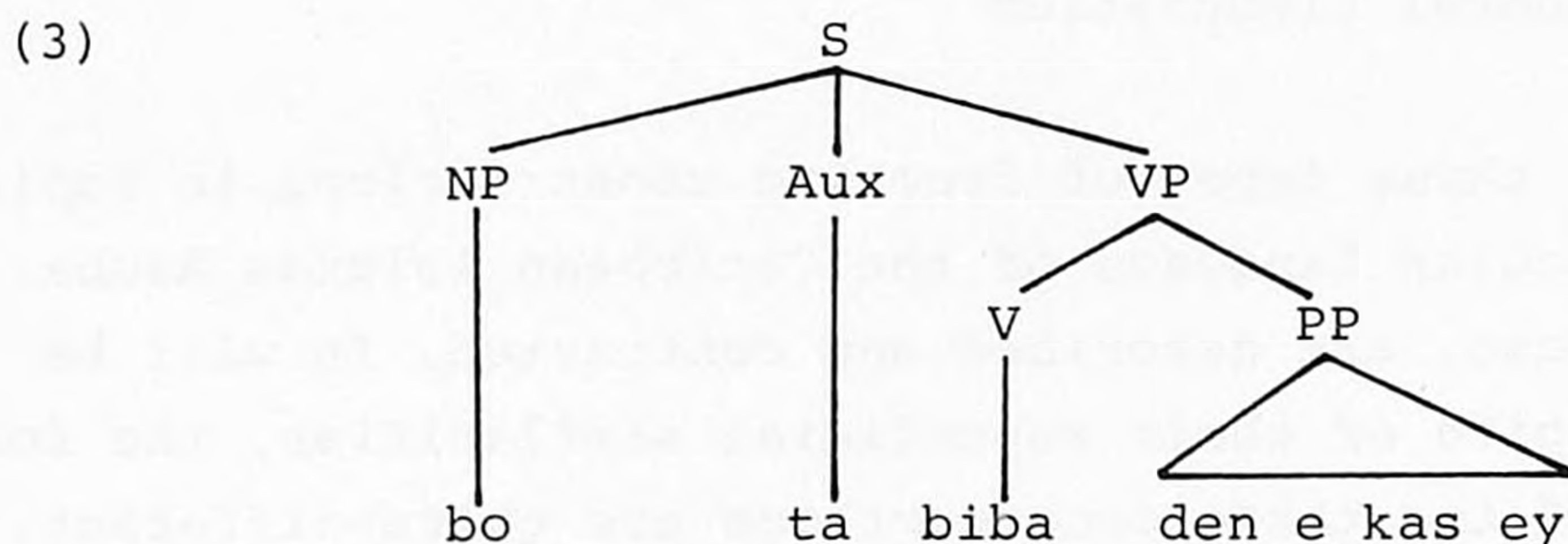
Papiamentu is a language in many ways structurally similar to the other Caribbean Creole languages, with a vocabulary largely derived from Spanish and Portuguese. The verbal inflections of the Iberian languages have largely disappeared, and have been replaced by a system of pre-verbal tense/aspect markers. The Papiamentu Phrase Structure rules are roughly as follows:

- (1) $\bar{S} \rightarrow (TOP) \bar{S}$
TOP $\rightarrow ta \dots$
 $\bar{S} \rightarrow COMP S$
COMP $\rightarrow \{ku, pa, \dots\}$
S $\rightarrow NP Aux VP (VP)$
VP $\rightarrow V (NP) (NP) (PP*)$
Aux $\rightarrow (no) (lo) \left\{ \begin{array}{c} \emptyset \\ (taba) ta \\ a \end{array} \right\}$

Given Phrase Structure rules such as these, a simple Papiamentu

sentence (2) would have structure (3):

- (2) bo ta biba den e kas ey
 you ASP live in the house there
 'you live in that house'



Finally, it should be noted that word order in Papiamentu is rather rigid; the only deviations from the base order specified above are the fronting constructions which are the subject of this paper.

2. Fronting constructions

We will discuss the following three fronting constructions (5)-(7) here, which are all related to (4):

- (4) m'a dunabo e buki
 I-ASP gave you the book
 'I gave you the book'
- (5) ta e buki m'a dunabo ____ CLEFT
- (6) ta duna m'a duna e buki PREDICATE CLEFT
- (7) e buki m'a dunabo ____ FRONTING

These three constructions will be analyzed separately.

2.1. Cleft

In the construction named 'cleft' here, an element appears in a prominent position to the left of a clause, introduced by ta, and it is related to an empty position in that clause. The fronted element is interpreted as focussed upon, sometimes contrastively.

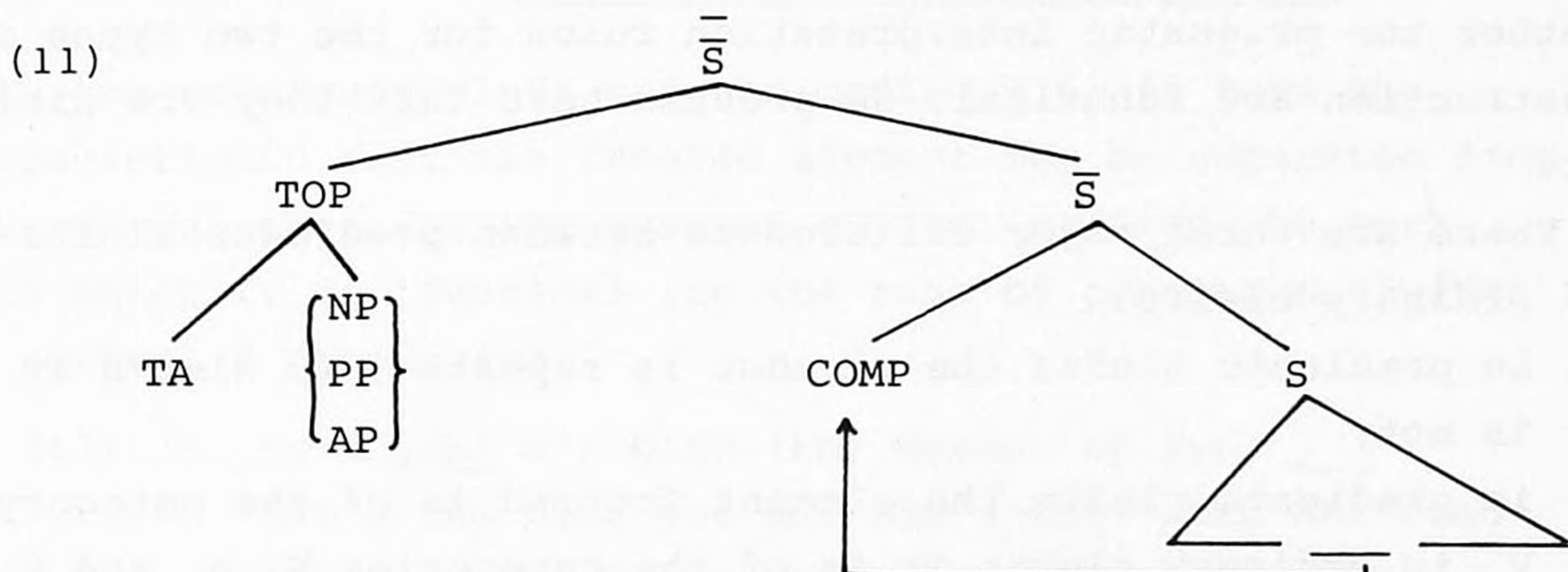
The element focussed upon can be either an NP, as in (8):

- (8) a t'ami ____ a dunabo e buki
'it's I who gave you the book'
b t'abo m'a duna ____ e buki
'it's you who I gave the book'
c ta e buki m'a dunabo ____
'it's the book that I gave you'

Or a AP, as in (10):

- (10) si ta blanku bo ta ____, ta karinjoso bo ta ____
'if it's white what you are, it's nice what you are',
'if you're white, you're nice'

I will assume the following general structure for clefts in Papiamentu ¹⁾:



I will assume that the clefted elements are base-generated, and that they are related by a rule of Wh-movement (Chomsky, 1977) to an identical element which is moved into COMP, and there deleted. Arguments for analyzing these clefts in terms of Wh-movement are given elsewhere (Muysken, 1977). Note, for instance, that the clefted elements may be related to a position in an embedded sentence, and that cleft formation is subject to all the constraints of relative clause formation and Wh-question formation in Papiamentu.

2.2. Predicate cleft

Yillah & Bynoe-Andriolo (1975) have analyzed the 'predicate cleft' construction which is characteristic of a number of

West African languages and Caribbean creole languages. It involves an element which occurs twice: once in the prominent position, after ta, and once in its base-generated position. In other Caribbean creole languages elements in predicate cleft constructions can be both adjectives and adverbs, and verbs. In Papiamentu only verbs can appear in predicate clefts:

- (12) ta traha e ta traha V
 'he is really working'
- (13) * ta grandi e ta grandi A 2)
 'he is really big'

Similarly to the ordinary cleft, the predicate clefts is interpreted as expressing contrastive focus. Since the pragmatic characteristics of the predicate cleft construction have not been well investigated yet in any language, we do not know yet whether the pragmatic interpretation rules for the two types of construction are identical. We presume here that they are similar.

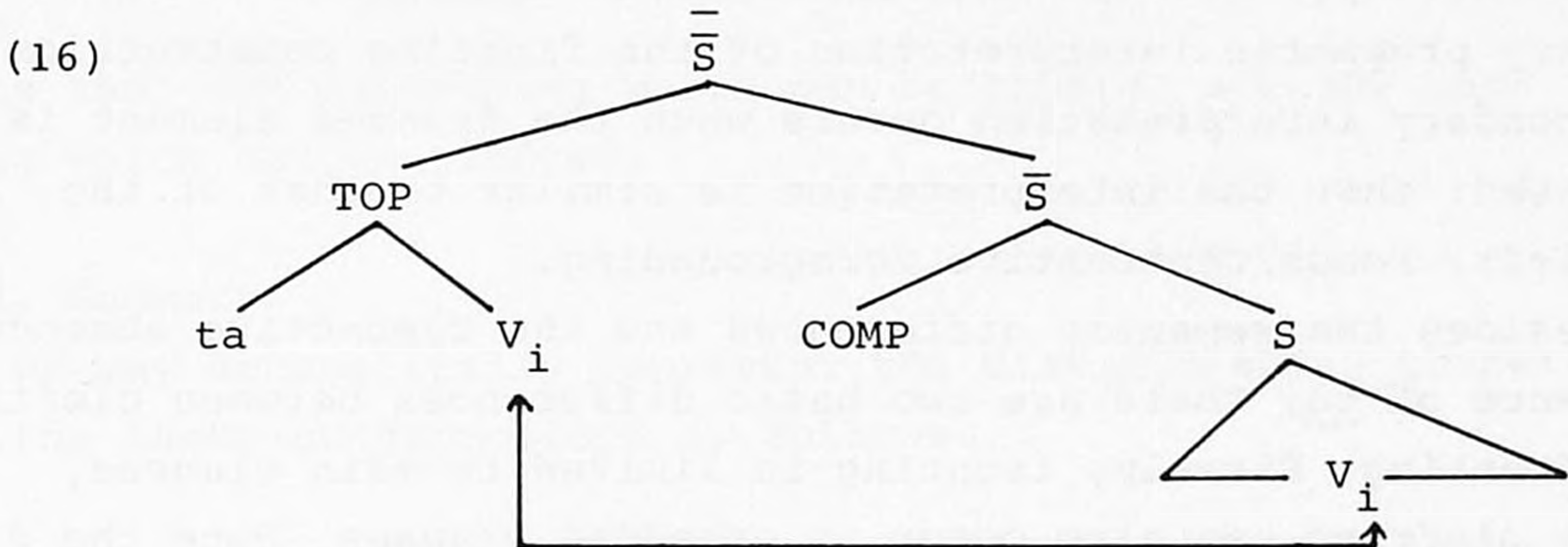
There are three major differences between predicate clefts and ordinary clefts:

- (a) in predicate clefts the element is repeated, in clefts it is not;
- (b) in predicate clefts the element fronted is of the category V, in ordinary clefts it is of the categories N, A, and P;
- (c) a final difference between the two constructions involves the internal complexity of the fronted constituent. In predicate clefts, only a bare V may appear in the prominent position, in clefts a constituent of any level of complexity. Note, for instance, the ungrammaticality of (14) as compared to the grammaticality of (15), where the 'fronted' NP involves a complete relative clause:

- (14) *ta tabata traha e tabata traha
 'he really worked'
- (15) no ta [tur kachó ku ta grita na kaya] bo por tira
 not is all dog that ASP bark in street you can throw
 'it isn't every dog that barks in the street that

___ ku piedra
with stone
you can throw a stone at'

On the basis of the characteristics sketched, we can assign a tree configuration such as (16) to the predicate cleft construction:



Both the predicate cleft and the ordinary cleft have the characteristic that the fronted element may be separated from its removal site (in the case of clefts) or from the verb with which it is identical (in the case of predicate clefts) by several S boundaries:

(17) ta e buki b'a bisa (ku) Wanchu ta lesa ___
'it's the book you-ASP say (that) John ASP read
'it's the book you said that John is reading'

(18) ta lesa b'a bisa (ku) Wanchu ta lesa e buki
'it's reading you said that John is doing
(with the book)'

In the case of (17), this follows from our assumption that Wh-movement is involved in the generation of clefts. In the case of (18), this solution is not available in the theoretical framework adopted; we will return to the question how to account for it later.

2.3. Fronting

A third process will be described here as 'fronting' in its literal sense: a constituent is moved to a clause-initial position:

- (19) a m'a mira Wanchu na kaya
 I-ASP see John in street
 'I saw John in the street'
 b Wanchu m'a mira ____ na kaya
 'John I saw in the street'

In (19b) Wanchu is made the topic, and what follows is the comment. This type of topic-comment structure seems to be the primary pragmatic interpretation of the fronting construction. A secondary interpretation occurs when the fronted element is stressed; then the interpretation is similar to that of the ta cleft: focus/contrastive foregrounding.

Besides the semantic differences and the respective absence/presence of ta, there are two basic differences between clefting and fronting. Firstly, fronting is limited to main clauses, while clefting can also occur in embedded clauses. Note the difference in grammaticality between (20) and (21):

- (20) e sa ku ta e buki di mi bo ta lesa
 he know that is the book of me you ASP read
 'he knows that it's my book you're reading'
 (21) * e sa ku Ø e buki di mi bo ta lesa ³⁾

The fact that the fronting construction is limited to main clauses suggests that the fronted element moves into the empty COMP position.

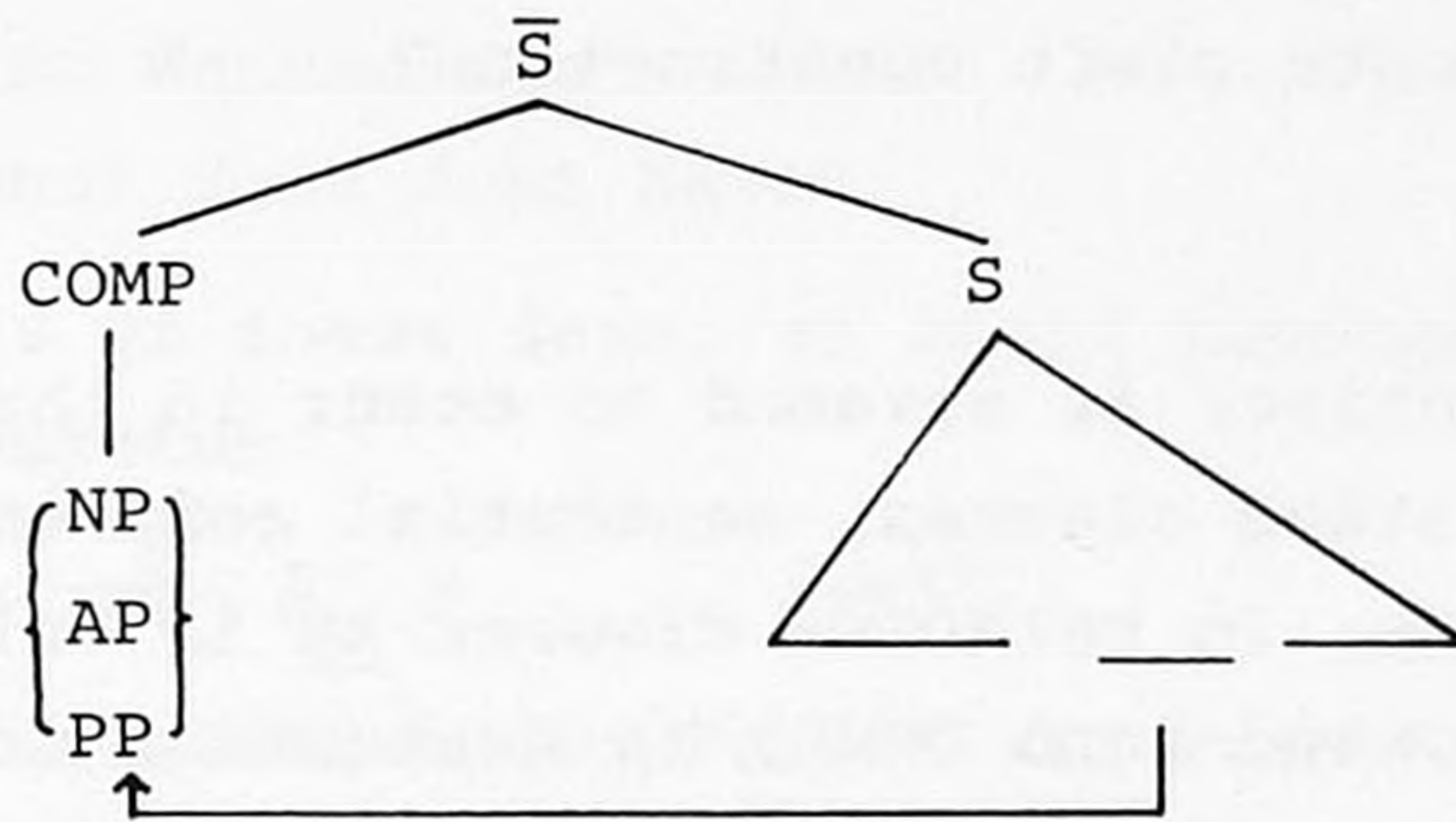
A second difference between clefting and fronting is that clefting is unbounded, in the sense indicated above, while fronting cannot involve more than one clause:

- (22) ta Wanchu Maria a bisa (ku) m'a mira ____
 is John Mary ASP say that I-ASP see
 'it's John Mary said that I saw'
 (23) ?Wanchu Maria a bisa (ku) m'a mira

Unfortunately, the intuitions are not quite clear on this point. ⁴⁾

We may analyze fronting constructions as sketched in the following configuration:

(24)



Note that the categories which can be fronted are the same ones which can be clefted.

2.4. Summary

We may schematically represent the distinguishing properties of the three constructions as follows:

(25)	cleft	pred. cleft	fronting
repetition element	-	+	-
ta ____	(+)	(+)	-
complex element	+	-	+
NP, AP, PP	+	-	+
V	-	+	-
in embedded clauses	+	+	-
Wh-movement	+	-	-
"unbounded"	+	+	-
focus/contrastive foregrounding	+	+	-
topicalization	-	-	+

We assume that the configurations (11), (18), and (24) adequately lead to the properties sketched in (25).

3. Remaining problems

The presentation of the three constructions has been relatively straightforward, but several problems remain: What is the position of the empty COMP in the cleft and predicate cleft constructions? Can we assume a rule of ta deletion in specific circumstances? What is the relation between the ta in TOP and the copula ta? What kind of rule relates the two identical

verbs in the predicate cleft construction?

3.1. Ku-deletion

The ku complementizer is assumed to occur in three types of constructions: relative clauses, sentential complements, and clefts of both types. In relative clauses ku is only deleted when a Wh-PP is fronted into COMP; in sentential complements ku is optionally present, as we can see in (14) and (22); in clefts ku is never present.

Assuming a rule of free deletion in COMP (Chomsky & Lasnik, 1977), limited by principles of recoverability of deletion, we need two filters, one for relative clauses, and one for clefts. A first approximation of these two filters is:

(26) * [NP .. [\bar{S} [COMP \emptyset]

(27) * [TOP] [\bar{S} ku ..

The analysis given in (11) and (18) will gain in plausibility if an adequate formulation for (26) and (27) can be found.

3.2. Ta-deletion

Given the alternation in Jamaican Creole between focussed (28a) and non-focussed (28b) Wh-questions, Bailey (1966) proposes to relate them transformationally through a rule of a deletion:

- (28) a a huu put it de
'who is it that put it there?'
b huu put it de
'who put it there?'

We have an alternation in Negerhollands between (29a) and (29b), and in Papiamentu between (30a) and (30b):

- (29) a da wie bin daeso
'who is it that is there?'
b wie bin daeso
'who is there?'
(30) a ta kiko Wanchu tin
'what is it that John has?'

- b kiko Wanchu tin
'what does John have?'

On the basis of these data, we could propose a ta deletion rule for Papiamentu:

$$(31) \quad ta \Rightarrow \emptyset / \text{---} [+Wh]$$

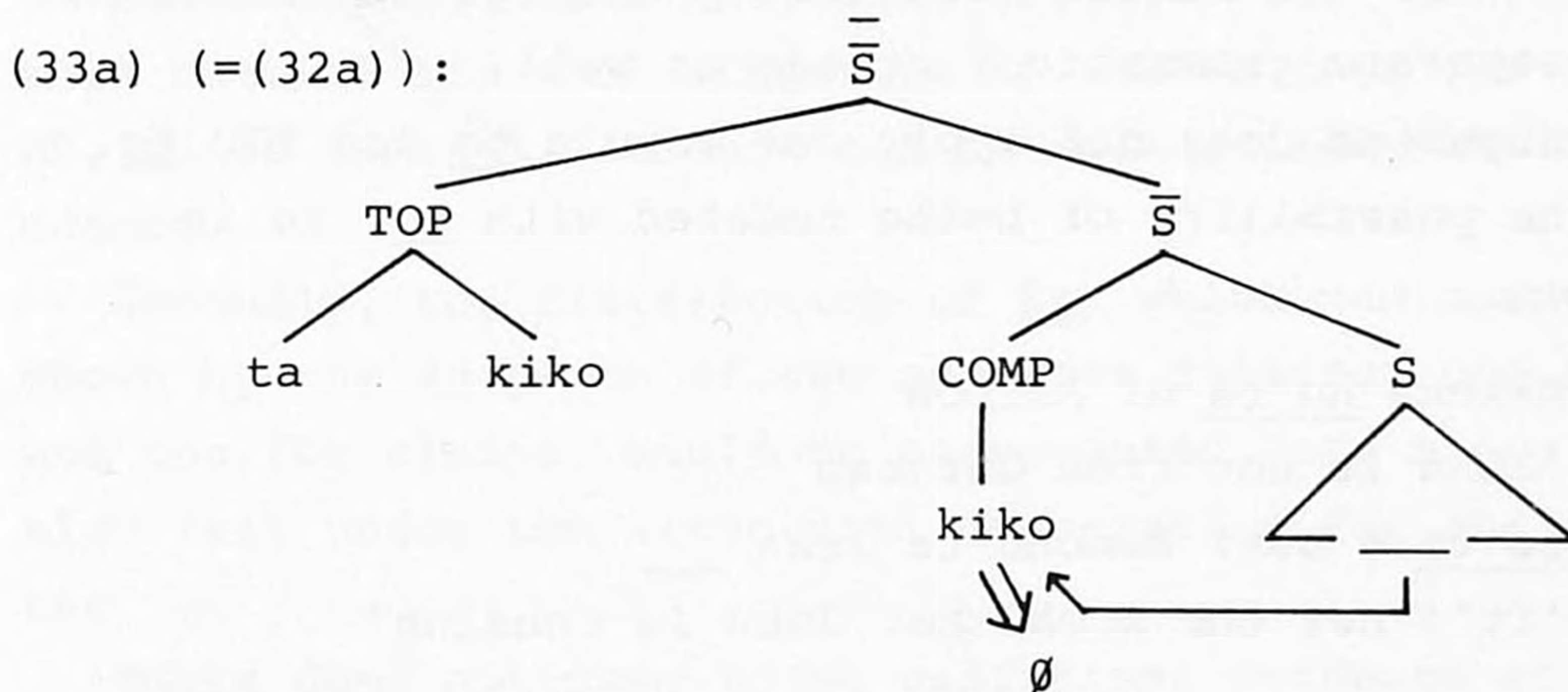
Assuming that deletion rules follow all rules of semantic interpretation, this would mean that the (a) and (b) versions of (28)-(30) would be paraphrases of each other. Since the questioned elements in Wh-questions are in themselves focussed upon, it is hard to establish semantic differences between the two sentences. Nonetheless, we do find slight differences in meaning.

Compare, for instance, (32a) and (b):

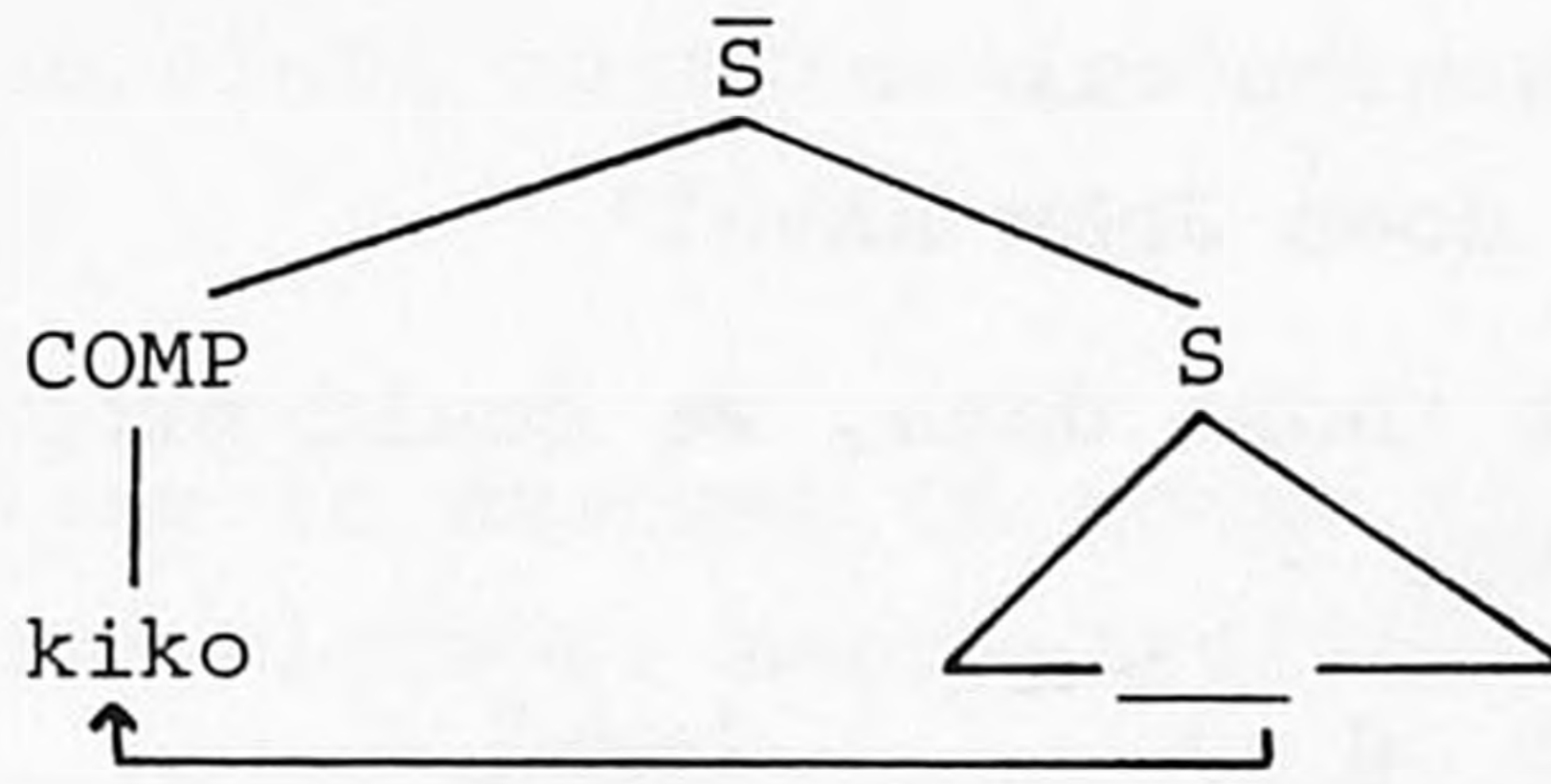
- (32) a ta kiko b'a trese pa mi
is what you-ASP bring for me
'what did you bring me?'
- b kiko b'a trese pa mi

In (32b) the question is simply 'what did you bring me?', while (32a) presupposes that indeed the other person did bring something, and the question is intended to find out what precisely was brought.

These and other examples might suggest that (31) does not belong to the grammar of Papiamentu and that e.g. (32a) and (b) have different base configurations:



(33b) (= (32b)) :



On the basis of the distribution of cleft and fronting clauses, and the data presented in the footnotes 3) and 4), we may come to an alternative hypothesis, however, which holds that the presence of ta is in fact optional in cleft sentences. In that case, one of the base rules in (1) would have to be revised to:

- (1) ' $\bar{S} \rightarrow (\text{TOP}) \bar{S}$
 $\text{TOP} \rightarrow (\text{ta}) \dots$

This type of analysis would distinguish ta-less clefts from fronting constructions by the stress on the fronted element and by the intonation contour of the sentence.

3.3. How many ta's?

We find in Papiamentu three particles ta: the progressive aspect marker, the copula, and the TOP introducer, and wonder whether it is not really just one ta that we find here, appearing in several constructions. Römer (1977) shows that there are phonological differences between the aspect marker ta and the two other types, having to do with tone polarization phenomena. We will assume for the moment that this phonological difference indicates a separate grammatical status as well.

The same argument does not apply for copula ta and TOP ta. They share the possibility of being negated with no, as in (34a) and (b):

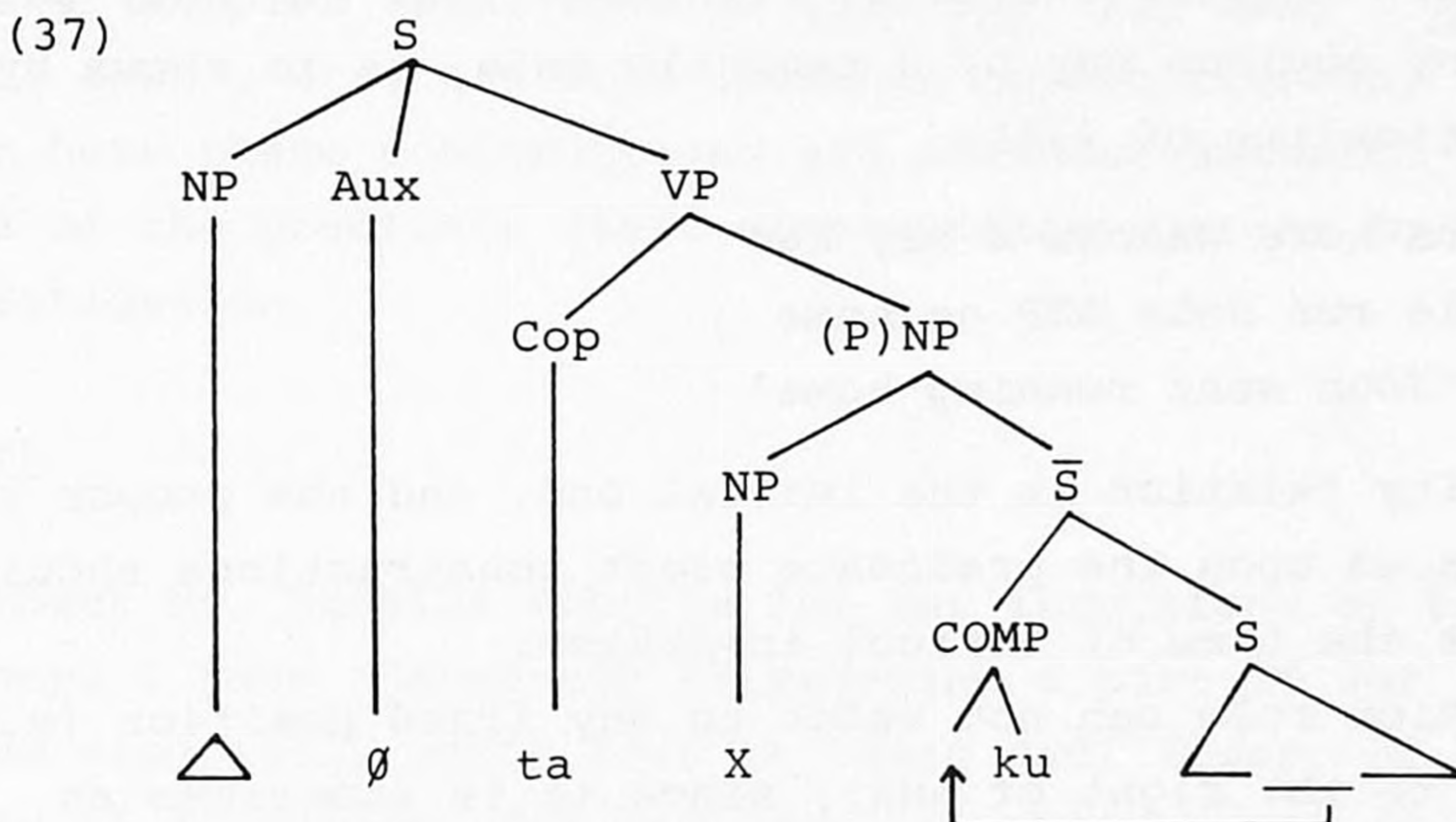
- (34) a Wanchu no ta di Korsow
 'John is not from Curacao'
 b no ta e buki Wanchu ta lesa ____
 'it's not the book that John is reading'

They differ, however, in their possibility of carrying tense/aspect; copula ta can carry the whole range of tense/aspect

distinctions, while TOP ta cannot:

- (35) * tabata e buki Wanchu tabata lesa
'it was the book that John was reading'
- (36) * lo ta e buki Wanchu lo ta lesa
'it will be the book that John will be reading' 5)

A further difference is that TOP ta can be followed by the category V in the predicate cleft construction, while copula ta can never be followed by V. Finally, note that if the two ta were identical, clefts would be rather similar to relative clauses; (11) would appear as:



There are a number of problems with this analysis, of which I will indicate only two here.

First of all, note that analysis (37) for clefts comes far more natural for the categories NP and PP than for the category AP, since nominal elements can be relativized, while adjectives cannot.

Secondly, the distribution of ku, which was accounted for above by the adoption of two separate filters, one for relatives and one for clefts, would be unaccounted for, since clefts would also fall under the structural description for the relative filter.

There does not seem to be sufficient evidence at this stage to make a definite choice between (11) and (37). If we take

Jackendoff's (1975) proposal to use the base rules as redundancy rules seriously, we could also account for the partial resemblance between TOP ta and the copula ta in terms of such a redundancy rule.

3.4. The identical verbs

A final problem involves the identical verbs in the predicate cleft construction. We have suggested that both verbs are base-generated separately. There needs to be a rule, however, which assures that the two verbs are identical, for a grammatical sentence to result. The verbs are not identical in terms of some index 'i' which relates identical referents; nor can they be related in any obvious way by a semantic rule, as is shown by the ungrammaticality of (38):

- (38) * ta kore Wanchu a bay kas
is run John ASP go home
'John went running home'

The identity relation is the lexical one, and the proper restrictions placed upon the predicate cleft constructions should be located at the time of lexical insertion.

The insertion rule can not refer to any fixed position (e.g. the position to the right of Aux), since it is sometimes an infinitival complement that is predicate-clefted:

- (39) (ta) bay Maria kera bay fiesta
is go Mary want ASP go party
'Mary really wanted to go to the party'

Any of the verbs in a serial construction such as (40) may be fronted:

- (40) Wanchu mester lanta kore bay para na bentana
'John must get up run go stand at window'
- (41) a (ta) mester Wanchu mester lanta kore bay para na bentana
b (ta) lanta Wanchu mester lanta kore bay para na bentana
c (ta) kore Wanchu mester lanta kore bay para na bentana

d (ta) bay Wanchu mester lanta kore bay para na
bentana

e (ta) para Wanchu mester lanta kore bay para na
bentana

The optionality of ta in constructions such as (39) and (41) suggests that the solution hypothesized in a previous section of ta deletion (or optional ta insertion) is the correct one. Otherwise we would have to assume two predicate cleft constructions, one similar to cleft, in having ta, and one similar to fronting, in having no ta.

In (41), only one of the verbs could be fronted. Only in the case of complex verbs such as bula bay 'fly away', dal abow 'fall down', etc. can both elements appear fronted, although even here these constructions are somewhat awkward. The properties of the predicate cleft construction warrant much further investigation.

Notes

* I thank Ms. Murella Roberta for her intuitions on Papiamentu; I hope I have adequately represented a part of her grammar. I also especially would like to thank Raúl Römer, of the University of Amsterdam, for his help in making sense of the data, and to the participants of the Fronting Festival, December 14, 1977, in Leiden, for their comments.

1. There is a class of adverbs of time and place:

aki	'here'
patras	'at the back, backwards'
awor	'now'
asina	'thus'

which can be clefted. We will assume that these elements belong to the categories NP and PP.

2. There may be a small group of speakers for whom (13) is grammatical. For this group the strict division made in (b) below does not hold.

3. It is unclear whether (21) is ungrammatical or just very awkward. It becomes better by making the fronted object definite (and pronounced with stress):

(21) ' nan a bisami ku e buki ei bo ke ____
they ASP tell-me that that book you want
'they told me it's that book you want'

In one of the last sections of this paper the hypothesis is brought forward that this case is the result of a ta deletion rule. If that hypothesis holds, the distinction made here between clefting and fronting is valid.

4. The true situation may be as follows:

(23) ' Wanchu Maria a bisa (ku) m'a mira ____
(Wanchu stressed and focus)

(23) ' ' * Wanchu Maria a bisa (ku) m'a mira ____
(Wanchu unstressed and topic)

(23) ' ' ' Wanchu Maria a bisa (ku) m'a miré
(anaphoric pronoun and no movement,
Wanchu unstressed and topic)

This distribution can easily be accounted for within the ta deletion hypothesis sketched later on. (see also note 3).

5. Sentence (36) is grammatical in the reading:

(36) ' 'It probably is the book that he will be reading'

Compare:

(36) ' ' lo ta malu e ta
ASP is ill he is
'he is probably ill'

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